

OVERVIEW

The health care industry is going digital. Don't get left behind as the industry evolves.

Using an EHR can help you improve patient care—and the health of the community—by improving communication and giving you better information for decision-making.

Beginning in 2011, the Medicare and Medicaid EHR incentive programs will provide money to health care professionals and hospitals for adopting certified Electronic Health Records (EHRs); but only if the technology is being used in a “meaningful” way that supports the ultimate goals of improving quality, safety and efficiency of care.

These incentive programs are part of a federally funded stimulus plan designed to help eligible professionals and hospitals adopt and meaningfully use electronic health record technology.

A program for health care professionals and hospitals

To remain competitive and meet today's standard of care, you need to be on the EHR track. The Medicare and Medicaid EHR incentive programs can help if you are eligible to participate.

- Eligible professionals for the Medicare incentive program are those with the title of MD, DO, DDS, DMD, DPM, OD, or DC.
- Eligible professionals for the Medicaid incentive program are those with the title of MD, DO, DDS, DMD, certified nurse-midwife, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant (if practicing in a physician assistant-led Federally Qualified Health Center or Rural Health Clinic).
- Eligible hospitals for the Medicare incentive program are subsection (d) hospitals and critical access hospitals.
- Eligible hospitals for the Medicaid incentive program are acute care (including critical access hospitals), and children's hospitals.

Eligible professionals can choose to participate in either the Medicaid or the Medicare incentive program. They may not receive incentive program payments simultaneously from both programs. Hospitals may be eligible to participate in both incentive programs.

Just having EHR technology isn't enough to improve care. It's all about how the technology is used in practice as a tool to transform health care service delivery and improve patient care.

Which program to choose? For an overview of the differences between the Medicare and Medicaid programs, see the EHR Incentive Program & Meaningful Use in Washington State Q & A

Incentive payments

Transitioning to an EHR—and demonstrating meaningful use—is a major undertaking. Now you can receive money to help offset the costs.

Each eligible professional who demonstrates meaningful use of a certified EHR can receive up to \$44,000 over five years in the Medicare incentive program or up to \$63,750 over six years in the Medicaid incentive program. Payments begin as early as 2011.

Eligible professionals practicing in areas deemed as Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs) who are participating in the Medicare incentive program are eligible for a 10% increase in the maximum payment amount (which means a maximum payment of \$48,400).

Eligible hospitals can receive a total of up to \$11 million over four years for the Medicare and Medicaid incentive programs combined. Payments begin as early as 2011.

Demonstrating meaningful use

“Meaningful use” is defined in a very specific way for health care professionals and hospitals, and certain criteria must be met to receive payment.

In the first two years of the incentive program, criteria for the meaningful use of a certified EHR fall into these general categories:

- Delivering care such as e-prescribing and CPOE (Computerized Physician Order Entry)
- Exchanging health information with other providers of care or business partners like labs or pharmacies
- Reporting clinical quality, public health and other measures

To receive incentive payments, you must meet all of the “core criteria” and a set number of additional criteria from the “menu set,” at least one of which must be a population health criteria.

Get prepared now. The timeframe is short and the sooner you act, the more money you can receive. Eligible health care professionals can contact the Washington & Idaho Regional Extension Center (WIREC) for technical assistance, guidance and information. Go to www.wirecqh.org.

What are all the criteria? For a detailed list of criteria, go to www.cms.gov/EHRIncentivePrograms/Downloads/NPRM_vs_FR_Table_Comparison_Final.pdf

More information for eligible professionals

Technical Assistance for Eligible Professionals:

www.wirecqh.org

Info and Assistance for Eligible Professionals:

Bob Perna, Washington State Medical Association, rjp@wsma.org

Incentive Calculator for Eligible Professionals:

www.himformatics.com/himss/final.htm

Info and Registration:

www.cms.gov/EHRIncentivePrograms

Info on Certified EHR Technology:

healthit.hhs.gov

More information for hospitals

Info and Assistance for Eligible Hospitals:

Jim Cannon, Washington State Hospital Association, jimc@wsma.org

Info and Registration:

www.cms.gov/EHRIncentivePrograms

Info on Certified EHR Technology:

healthit.hhs.gov

Incentive Calculator for Hospitals:

www.himss.org/EconomicStimulus/calculator/EcoStimulQuest.htm

